

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 L-03 RSR-01 /111 W
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P 170622 Z MAY 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6981

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

S E C R E T HONG KONG 4877

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI CH US HK

SUBJ: TRANSHIPMENT OF MILITARY CARGO FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA
VIA HONG KONG

SUMMARY. SEALAND PLANS TO INITIATE JUNE 1 TRANSHIPMENT VIA HONG KONG OF MILITARY CARGO DESTINED FOR VIETNAM AND THAILAND. THESE SHIPMENTS, AUTHORIZED UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT, WILL INCLUDE SOME SMALL ARMS ON A CASE-BY-CASE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED BASIS. CONGEN HAS RAISED THIS MATTER WITH HONG KONG POLITICAL ADVISER. END SUMMARY

1. SOME WEEKS AGO WE WERE INFORMALLY ADVISED THAT SEALAND WAS PLANNING TO INITIATE HONG KONG TRANSHIPMENT POINT OF MILITARY CARGO DESTINED FOR SAIGON, VIETNAM AND SATTAHIP, THAILAND. THIS NEW PROCEDURE WAS TO BE INITIATED SOME TIME AFTER JULY 1. ON MAY 14 WHEN MAJGENERAL DEL MAR, COMMANDER OF THE WESTERN AREA, MILITARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND TERMINAL SERVICE, OAKLAND, CALIF, VISITED THE HONG KONG OFFICE OF SEALAND AND THEIR NEW CONTAINER TERMINAL AT KWAI CHUNG, SEALAND OFFICIALS SAID THAT THEY HOPED THE NEW SERVICE COULD BE INITIATED JUNE 1. THE NEW PROCEDURE WILL EMPLOY LARGE CONTAINER VESSELS (THE SL-7), THE FIRST OF WHICH IS DUE IN TOKYO ON MAY 28 AND WHICH WILL SUBSEQUENTLY

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VISIT HONG KONG. SEALAND OFFICIALS STATE (WITH U. S. MILITARY CONCURRENCE) IT IS NO LONGER FEASIBLE TO USE CAM RANH BAY AS TRANSHIPMENT POINT. DEACTIVATION OF CAM RANH BAY WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THERE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT COMMERCIAL BENEFITS TO HONG KONG WITH AN ADDITIONAL 1,000 PLUS CONTAINERS PER MONTH TRANSITING HONG KONG. AS ALL CARGO IS CONTAINERIZED AND HELD IN A SECURE, BONDED AREA SECURITY IS EXCELLENT.

2. SEALAND HAS APPARENTLY ALREADY INDICATED TO THE HONG KONG HARBOR BUREAU THAT HONG KONG WAS TO BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE; HOWEVER, THEY DID NOT CLEARLY SPECIFY THAT MILITARY CARGO WOULD INCLUDE SOME SMALL ARMS. ALL CARGO FOR TRANSHIPMENT INCLUDING ANY SMALL ARMS IS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED BY ARTICLE 7 OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS AND ATTESTED TO BY MAJGEN MURRAY, DATT SAIGON, ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. AIMS WILL BE USED SOLELY TO REPLACE EQUIPMENT ALREADY IN SOUTH VIETNAM ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS. MAJGEN DEL MAR STRESSED THAT THERE WILL BE NO SEALAND TRANSHIPMENTS TO CAMBODIA AND THAT ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF EACH SMALL ARMS SHIPMENT COULD BE PROVIDED THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT PRIOR TO SHIPMENT. MAJGEN DEL MAR BELIEVES THAT THERE IS NO FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO USE OF HONG KONG AS A TRANSHIPMENT POINT. IF PERMISSION TO USE HONG KONG WAS DENIED, IT IS PROBABLE THAT ALL CARGO HANDLING WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE IN THE US WITH INCREASED COSTS AND PROBLEMS.

3. CONGEN HAS APPROACHED HKG POLITICAL ADVISER TO SEEK HKG CONCURRENCE WITH THESE PLANS. POLAD HAS PROMISED PROMPT REPLY. HKG MAY REFER THE MATTER TO LONDON. CONGEN BELIEVES THAT THE BRITISH ARE LIKELY TO ACCOMMODATE USG UNLESS LONDON FEELS PEKING WOULD BE STRONGLY OPPOSED. THE PRC IS UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE THAT NON-US FLAG VESSELS WITH HONG KONG CREWS HAVE BEEN SHIPPING US MILITARY CARGO TO PHNOM PENH, AND WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY PRC OBJECTIONS TO THE HKG REGARDING THIS PROCEDURE. IN THIS LIGHT, SINCE NO CARGO IS DESTINED FOR CAMBODIA AND IT ALL IS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE CEASE FIRE AGREEMENTS WE BELIEVE HKG IS UNLIKELY TO OBJECT.

OSBORN

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973HONGK04877
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730548/aaaajknr.tel
Line Count: 100
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <24-Aug-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980219
Subject: TRANSHIPMENT OF MILITARY CARGO FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA VIA HONG KONG
TAGS: MILI, CH, HK, US, MILI
To: EA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005